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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8101
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1266
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 1409
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0855
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0496
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY 0101
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1888
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0169
RUEHFL/AMCONSUL FLORENCE PRIORITY 2389
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 8662
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY 2555
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY 0106
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 0093

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SUBJECT: OIE CHINA/TAIWAN: ITALY SUPPORTS EU POSITION TO
DELAY VOTE

REF: STATE 67444

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor David D. Pearce for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Poloff delivered reftel points to MFA Office Director for East Asia Giuseppe Mistretta May 21, emphasizing the need to work for consensus and delay a vote on the PRC resolution in the absence of consensus. May 22, Mistretta responded that Italy fully supported the EU position:

--The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) was a technical organization and should not be a forum for political issues.

--The Chinese resolution, even amended, would contain language that was too tough on Taiwan and should not be voted on during this assembly.

--If the resolution had to come to a vote, the vote should be by secret ballot.

However, there were several EU countries that would not object to the resolution in exchange for PRC participation in the OIE--including Cyprus, Malta, Hungary and other new members. The EU would have a meeting May 23 to try to reach consensus on the issue.

¶2. (C) Mistretta noted that while Italy's representative, Romano Marabelli, was in daily contact with the MFA and fully supported the GOI position, many of the other OIE representatives--experts not used to following MFA instructions--might act as they saw fit if the resolution came to a vote. Mistretta noted that the French and Bulgarian representatives seemed particularly willing to go their own way. He suggested that lobbying the delegates themselves in Paris would be the most effective way to win votes.

¶3. (C) While Italy strongly believed politics should be kept out of the OIE, Mistretta said he thought the U.S., EU, and like-minded countries were in the minority. He also raised concerns that President Barry O'Neil was not only pushing for a vote, but an open vote. Mistretta had spoken with New Zealand's Ambassador in Rome to gauge if O'Neil was acting on instructions from Wellington. She was not aware of the issue, but promised to consult with her MFA.
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